

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(Regarding Certified Nurse Assistants and/or Certified Home Health Aides)

*Department of Health Services (DHS)
Licensing and Certification Program (L&C)
Aide and Technician Certification Section (ATCS)
CNA/HHA/CHT Certification Unit (Registry)
1615 Capitol Avenue, MS 3301
P. O. Box 997416
Sacramento, CA 95899-7416
FAX Number: (916) 552-8785 E-Mail CNA@DHS.CA.GOV*

A. INITIAL CERTIFICATION

1. *Why did my classmate get a longer period of time on his/her initial certificate than I did?*

Some applicants get a longer period of time on their initial certification because certificates are issued based on an individual's date of birth. However, all CNAs/HHAs will receive at least two years from the effective date on their initial certificate.

2. *I passed the CNA test some months ago. What is holding up my certificate?*

For ATCS to issue a CNA certificate, the applicants must have passed the competency exam AND the background investigation must have been cleared.

3. *Can I get certified if I have had prior convictions?*

It depends on the type of convictions that you have. If you have a conviction that may result in the denial of your certificate, you will be notified by mail. All CNAs/HHAs with convictions for misdemeanors and felonies, are reported to ATCS by the California Department of Justice (DOJ) for review. The Fingerprint Investigation Unit (FIU) of ATCS considers the type of conviction and other factors of good character and rehabilitation. After review, a decision will be made to either deny or issue you a criminal record clearance. However, ATCS is required to deny applicants who have certain misdemeanor and felony convictions. For a list of these crimes, contact your training program. A list can also be viewed on pages 30-32 of the *Certification Facts* booklet at the following website address: www.dhs.ca.gov/lnc/download/cert/certfacts.pdf.

4. *After I was convicted and completed probation, I had my conviction dismissed by the court. Will I be certified if my conviction was dismissed?*

After a conviction, the court may grant your request to have your case dismissed pursuant to Penal Code, 1203.4. If you obtained such a dismissal, your conviction will still be reported to ATCS for review to consider the type of crime and other factors of good character and rehabilitation.

5. *If I have a conviction, how long will it take to review my case?*

This depends on the workload in FIU and the type of criminal record that you have. For less serious offenses, the review may be completed in as little as four weeks from receipt of your criminal record from DOJ. Otherwise, the review may take four months or longer.

6. *Did ATCS receive my application material I recently sent?*

It is not possible to look through all incoming mail to find your application material due to a huge volume of applications received each day and limited number of staff. ATCS processes all applications by the date received in ATCS.

7. *Whom should I notify if I move?*

Within 60 days of your moving, you must send in your change of address to ATCS either by fax or write. (The address and FAX number are on page 1.) Be sure to include your Social Security number on any correspondence. Any information/documents that are sent to you will be sent to the address on the ATCS computer record. It is equally important to provide any change of telephone number.

B. RENEWALS

1. *What are continuing education units (CEUs) or in-service training hours and what kind of courses may I take to satisfy CNA and HHA renewal requirement?*

"CEU or in-service training" is any extra training over and above your working hours that enhances your knowledge of nursing skills. Certain college courses can also be counted converting the units to hours as follows: each semester unit=15 hours, each quarter unit=10 hours. The required number of CEUs or in-service training hours for CNAs is 48; for HHAs, it is 24 hours in the two-year certification period.

2. *If my CNA certificate has expired, may I renew without taking the exam?*

If your CNA certificate has been expired less than two years AND you have met the renewal requirements (obtained 48 hours of in-service/continuing education training hours AND worked at least one day for pay providing nursing services), you may renew your certificate by sending \$30 and a renewal application to ATCS and you will not have to take the exam.

3. *My certificate has expired, may I work?*

No, not until you send in your renewal application and fee as described above. Keep a copy of the application and the fee to show to your employer/prospective employer verifying that you did send these items to ATCS. It is the policy of ATCS to allow you to work if we have processed your application material. If your employer does not accept this policy, there is nothing ATCS can do to override that decision.

4. *Under what circumstances must I take CNA retraining?*

If your certificate expired more than two years. You must also be re-fingerprinted at the time of training.

5. *Can I renew my HHA certificate without renewing my CNA certificate?*

Yes, if your HHA certificate has not expired over two years. You should send the application and a fee of \$20 or if over 30 days past the expiration date, \$30 is required. If it is over two years from the expiration date, you must take HHA retraining. However, you may NOT take a 40-hour retraining course if you do not have an active CNA certificate. Without an active CNA certificate, you must take a 120-hour HHA training class.

6. *How much does it cost to renew?*

It costs \$20 if postmarked no more than 30 days after the certificate expires. Over 30 days, there will be an additional \$10 late fee. It costs no more if you renew both your CNA and HHA certificates at the same time.

7. *Am I supposed to receive a notice to renew?*

Yes. Approximately 4 months before time to renew, all CNAs/HHAs are sent renewal notices. However, sometimes the computer system malfunctions and the notices are not sent so if you have not received the notice within **3 months** of the expiration date, it is your responsibility to fax or send your request for a renewal application (HS 283Cform) to ATCS to the fax number or address on page 1. You may also get a copy of an HS 283C form on the web @ <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/publications/forms/L&C/l&c.htm>. As soon as you receive the notice/application, you should complete it and send it to ATCS to ensure that your employment will not be interrupted.

8. *What does "delinquent status" and "late fee" mean?*

It means that your certificate has expired more than 30 days, it is late and an additional \$10 is due to renew your certificate.

C. REACTIVATIONS

Why must I "reactivate" instead of being able to renew?

CNA "reactivations" are for applicants who cannot meet BOTH renewal requirements (worked 1 day for pay providing nursing services and accumulated 48 hours of in-service/continuing education training) and must re-take the exam OR for CNA and HHA applicants whose certificates have expired for more than 2 years. There are two options that you may take to reactivate your certificate if you don't qualify to renew:

1. FOR CNAs ONLY

If you HAVE NOT met BOTH of your renewal requirements AND IT IS LESS THAN TWO YEARS SINCE YOUR CERTIFICATE EXPIRED, you will qualify to retake the exam without re-training. Send your renewal application OR renewal notice to ATCS, check the box for "reactivation" and include a \$15 fee. You will be sent information about how and where you may take the exam to reactivate.

- **If it has been over two years since your certificate expired**, you must retrain at an ATCS-approved training program. Send an application and a \$15 fee to ATCS along with a copy of a completed BCII 8016 Request for Live Scan Service form which shows you have had fingerprints taken. New fingerprints are required even though you may have been previously cleared through a background check for CNA certification.
- After ATCS receives your application and \$15 fee, you complete the training, and ATCS receives verification from the testing vendor that you passed the exam, ATCS will reactivate your certificate accordingly.

2. FOR HHAs ONLY

- **If it has been over two years since your certificate expired, AND you have an active CNA certificate**, you must complete an approved 40-hour HHA training program and send an application and \$15 fee along with fingerprints (2nd copy of the completed Request for Live Scan Service form) to ATCS. New fingerprints are required even though you may have been previously cleared through a background check for HHA certification.
- When your training program reports to ATCS that you completed the training, ATCS can reactivate your certificate.
- Without an active CNA certificate, you must complete an approved 120-hour HHA training program to reactivate. You must send an application, fingerprints (2nd copy of the completed Request for Live Scan Service form) and a \$15 fee to ATCS. Once your training program reports to ATCS that you completed the training, ATCS can reactivate your HHA certification.